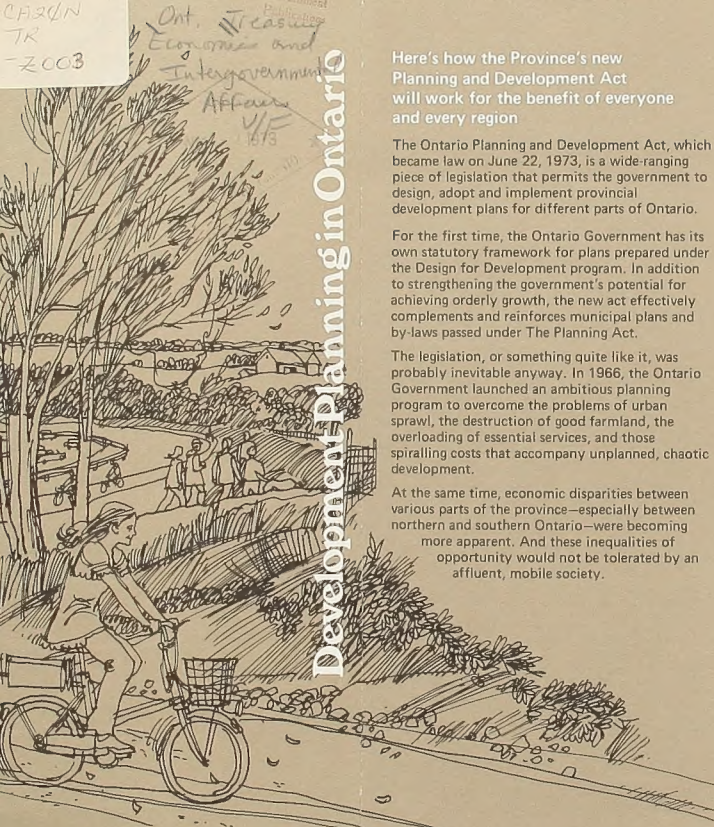


# Development Planning in Ontario



Here's how the Province's new Planning and Development Act will work for the benefit of everyone and every region

The Ontario Planning and Development Act, which became law on June 22, 1973, is a wide-ranging piece of legislation that permits the government to design, adopt and implement provincial development plans for different parts of Ontario.

For the first time, the Ontario Government has its own statutory framework for plans prepared under the Design for Development program. In addition to strengthening the government's potential for achieving orderly growth, the new act effectively complements and reinforces municipal plans and by-laws passed under The Planning Act.

The legislation, or something quite like it, was probably inevitable anyway. In 1966, the Ontario Government launched an ambitious planning program to overcome the problems of urban sprawl, the destruction of good farmland, the overloading of essential services, and those spiralling costs that accompany unplanned, chaotic development.

At the same time, economic disparities between various parts of the province—especially between northern and southern Ontario—were becoming more apparent. And these inequalities of opportunity would not be tolerated by an affluent, mobile society.

To meet this challenge, the Design for Development program was established so that each part of the province would be able to attain its full potential in an overall context of provincial policies and realistic economic goals.

Before setting out on this course, the government decided to concentrate on the broad issues of regional land use and economic planning because these were the issues that spilled across municipal boundaries.

Yet while every part of the province has since been affected by the program, much of the authority exercised to achieve the successes to date has had to be derived from the original Planning Act—legislation really designed for the *municipal* planning process.

The Ontario Planning and Development Act changes all this. Today the government is able to designate selected development planning areas where large-scale plans can be prepared. The new process also ensures that these provincial plans will have an open, full and continuing input from individuals, municipalities, ministries and others who might be affected.

Significantly, these plans will not duplicate local municipal plans and will cover much more than physical land use. Population allocation and density, management of land and water resources, pollution control, location and development of services and transportation systems are aspects which the development plans may cover.

Such plans will make it possible to set priorities for provincial action, so that the severest problems and most essential needs are given the earliest and most concentrated attention. (Effective priority-setting is virtually impossible if planning is handled separately by each municipality.)

Good planning can also provide the means for sharing a region's cultural assets. For instance, an area with roots deep in the pioneer past might become the historical centre for the whole region, while a university town might serve as the region's

"capital" for endeavours in the humanities or for scientific research well beyond the scope of its own curriculum. Such specializations within a region can strengthen and enrich the cultural lives of all residents.

A good regional plan will also have policies built into it for determining the type and location of major institutions, such as hospitals and colleges, and for co-ordination of the more detailed planning that is properly left to the municipalities.

Under the planning program made possible by this legislation we can help protect the environment, retain good farmland for agricultural production, provide recreation and open space, plan more efficient services, and make housing more readily available. Where the success of these goals depends on public ownership of land, the new legislation enables the provincial government to acquire it, subject to existing laws and practice.

While provincial planning will generally be on a wide scale, the actual geographic size of a development planning area will depend on impact, circumstances and need. The development planning area, for instance, could cover an entire provincial region—there are five—or it could be limited to a group of rural counties faced with urban development pressures they are not equipped to deal with. Or it could be the site for a new town.

The proposed parkway belt from Dundas to Oshawa is an example of how the act can be used. In the very first application of the new legislation, The Parkway Belt Planning and Development Act enables the province to begin implementing a system of multiple-use corridors around Toronto.

Geographically, the parkway belt system occupies a small part of the Central Ontario Region in which it is located. But strategically, the problems of defining and limiting urban growth here and establishing service and transportation corridors are of critical importance to the success of the province's planning and development strategies for the Central Ontario Region and beyond.

Yet, however admirable the goal, no provincial plan can become a reality unless local official plans and zoning by-laws are compatible, and the legislation stipulates that, where there is conflict, the provisions of the provincial plan shall prevail. Conversely, a provincial plan must take into account the needs and aspirations and the existing land-use policies of the municipalities in the area.

Meanwhile, the municipalities will likely be busier than ever with their own programs. They will continue to determine the kind and mix of development within their boundaries, and decisions that affect people within a municipality will be made by the council of that municipality. But at the same time, these decisions must take into account the overall provincial development plan since it deals with the impact on people in a much larger area.

On this point, the new legislation makes it clear that, once confirmed, a provincial development plan becomes government policy and all provincial agencies, municipalities and the private sector are required to adhere to its terms in framing their own plans and programs.

This means that municipalities without official plans and zoning by-laws would have to adopt them to conform to the province's plan. Others who already have planning programs would be expected to amend any conflicting plans and by-laws.

The legislation permits the province to make grants to municipalities preparing or amending their planning programs. Financial assistance can also be made available to any municipality, person or organization undertaking any program that would help implement the plan.

The mechanics of obtaining approval for a provincial development plan reveal the extent of public involvement in the process. Here is a brief outline of the steps involved:

First, the Minister of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs makes an order

establishing a development planning area and directing that a plan be prepared within two years (or some other specified period). The order is then laid before the Legislature, where it can be approved, revoked or varied.

If it is approved, the Minister then appoints at least two committees—municipal and citizen—to advise on the preparation and implementation of the plan. All municipalities affected must be consulted about its contents.

Once ready, the plan must be submitted to the councils and advisory committees, and viewing copies must be made available to the public. Everyone is invited to comment within a specified period, not less than three months.

After the required period for comments, the Minister appoints one or more hearing officers to conduct public hearings and present their findings to him. The hearing officers' reports too are made public.

The Minister must then submit the plan together with his own recommendations to Cabinet. If his proposal differs from that of the hearing officer's—and is approved—public notice must again be given and 21 days allowed for written representations to Cabinet.

Once approved, the plan becomes binding on the province, the municipalities and the public. Amendments to it, whether initiated by the Minister or applied for by agencies, groups or individuals, follow the same public consultation procedure as the plan.

If a question arises over the compatibility of a by-law, improvement or other municipal activity within a development planning area, the Minister may declare whether or not there is conflict.

Where an official plan or zoning by-law does not conform, the municipality is invited to suggest some way of resolving the conflict. Failing any appropriate resolution, the local plan can be amended by Ministerial order.

Generally, however, municipalities will be expected to adopt appropriate official plans and zoning by-laws and to revise their existing programs to conform with the provincial development plan. Financial aid can be provided to municipalities who do this.

When public ownership is necessary to implement any feature of the development plan, the province will be able to acquire the land involved and dispose of it accordingly.

Finally, the plan itself must not be looked upon as a static instrument. The Minister must initiate a review at least every five years, and he must follow the same procedure of consultation, submission of comments and public hearings as for the original adoption.

Thus, the value of the legislation to the general public is that it sets out a detailed process for consultation as the provincial government moves forward in the planning and development of the province.

Whatever plans are undertaken in various parts of Ontario, they will be developed openly and publicly within a clear and co-ordinated framework.

As a resident of Ontario, you will have ample opportunity to express *your* views *before* a plan becomes final.



Ministry of Treasury  
Economics and  
Intergovernmental  
Affairs

The Honourable John White, minister  
H. Ian Macdonald, deputy minister

#### REQUEST FOR OTHER INFORMATION

To: Information Services,  
Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs,  
5th Floor, Frost Building South, Queen's Park,  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y7

Please send me your pamphlet(s) on:

- ☐ The Parkway Belt West
- ☐ The Niagara Escarpment

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